



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

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With fresh fish and shellfish coming into the markets of the eastern half of the United States in great quantity and variety, market supplies of seafoods are now more plentiful than at any other season of the year, the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries reported today.

The heaviest increase in the landings of fish was felt in the Middle Atlantic area, with shad, cod, and mackerel the chief species responsible for swelling seafood supplies so greatly as to tax the capacity of the New York Market to absorb them.

Opening up of the pound net fisheries along the New Jersey and southern New England coasts will bring increasing quantities of croakers, sea trout, butterfish, scup and other shore fish into eastern markets during the next few weeks, officials of the Coordinator's Office said.

In the Great Lakes area, fresh water fish such as lake trout and pike entered the Chicago market in heavy quantity last week, reflecting the opening of the northern lakes where fishing is much restricted during the winter months.

Production of all seafoods except oysters, nearing the end of their season, is showing an increase in the Gulf of Mexico. The catch of shrimp, most important seafood of the south, normally increases for a brief period in the spring when the large or "jumbo" sizes are taken just before they begin an offshore migration into deep water. Mullet catches, resumed the first of April, are increasing in size and shipments of this excellent southern food fish are again reaching eastern cities.

Soft-shell crabs are now in season in North Carolina, the Coordinator's Office reported, and will be taken in the Chesapeake Bay beginning May 1. The catch of soft-shell crabs consists entirely of young crabs produced by the spawning of the previous season, and is restricted to the comparatively short season when the crabs are periodically shedding their hard shells.

Runs of fish which come in from the ocean to spawn in coastal rivers are now at their peak in several areas. Shad have been running in the Chesapeake Bay for several weeks and are now entering the Hudson in such large numbers that 882,000 pounds reached New York's Fulton Market last week. Alewives or river herring are now ascending the rivers of southern New England and may be expected along the Maine coast late in May. Important quantities of alewives were canned in the Chesapeake area as well as in New England last year.

The New England mussel fishery, a new industry which last year produced well over a million pounds of food in the form of canned mussels, also reaches its peak in April and May when the mussel beds are free of ice.